



H1N1 Provider Briefing

Date: December 9, 2009
To: All Healthcare Providers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Widespread¹; H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 352 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 3.02%, New England Region: 3.3%, Nation: 3.54%

Even though Rhode Island's flu activity continues to decrease, levels of influenza-like illness remain high compared to what is expected for this time of year. H1N1 vaccination remains important to protect individuals against a strongly anticipated additional wave of illness in the coming months.

H1N1 school-based clinic vaccine uptake

85,567 school-aged children have received the H1N1 vaccine over the first 20 days of HEALTH's 28-school-day H1N1 school-based vaccination program. Of the currently enrolled students in schools with clinics held during this time period, 75% received the vaccine.

H1N1 vaccination for adults with chronic illnesses and young adults

HEALTH is planning to open up H1N1 vaccination to adults through age 64 with chronic illnesses and for all young adults 18 through 24 years of age in their providers' offices soon. **Adult providers who have not yet enrolled in the H1N1 vaccine program are strongly encouraged to enroll now so that their high-risk patients can receive the vaccine.** The enrollment process will close on Friday, December 11 at 4 p.m. Currently enrolled vaccine providers should keep their adult patients with underlying medical conditions and young adults patients in mind when adjusting their original patient estimates. HEALTH will issue an additional provider briefing with more information on providing vaccine to these priority populations later this week.

H1N1 vaccine provider enrollment and reordering

The H1N1 vaccine provider enrollment process reopened December 2 for providers who did not enroll in the program during the initial enrollment period. **The deadline for enrollment is Friday, December 11 at 4 p.m.**

Current program enrollees who would like to increase their original patient estimates are also able to make these changes in the system at this time. Pediatric providers should keep in mind when adjusting their estimates that providers will be able to begin administering the H1N1 vaccine to school-aged children in grades kindergarten through 12 who missed their **first** doses of H1N1 vaccine after the completion of all regular school-based vaccination clinics. The last school-based clinic is currently scheduled for December 15. HEALTH is still planning for the second H1N1 vaccine dose for school-aged children through 9 years of age to occur in January and February in additional school-based clinics.

¹ Rhode Island reported widespread activity for the week of November 29 to December 5, 2009. Percentages of influenza-like illness remain above baseline and influenza lab confirmed cases were reported in over half of the state's 5 regions. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable H1N1 hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity reported by 27 sentinel surveillance sites from November 22 to November 28, 2009

Providers who did not complete the Vaccine Ordering/Priority Group Breakdown step in the H1N1 enrollment process **must do so now**. This step is required to finalize the enrollment process. To enroll in the H1N1 vaccine provider program, edit original enrollment information, or complete a priority group breakdown, see <http://pandemic.health.ri.gov/h1n1/>. For vaccine order assistance, please contact Sue Duggan-Ball at 222-1580, sue.dugganball@health.ri.gov or Heidi Wallace at 222-4631, heidi.wallace@health.ri.gov.

Reporting doses of H1N1 vaccine administered

Reporting H1N1 doses administered is a requirement for participation in the vaccine program. All vaccine providers are reminded to submit reports of H1N1 vaccine administered electronically on a weekly basis to HEALTH. HEALTH monitors these reports closely and makes decisions about vaccine allocation, redistribution between practices, and changes in priority groups based on the uptake of vaccine in each of your practices. **Failure to report administered doses in a timely fashion may result in a delay in further shipments of H1N1 vaccine.** For reporting instructions and to report doses administered, please see the H1N1 vaccine provider website at <http://pandemic.health.ri.gov/h1n1/>.

H1N1 vaccination schedule

HEALTH has created an H1N1 vaccination schedule that contains H1N1 vaccine information for different subsets of the population, including groups prioritized for vaccination. For each group, the schedule displays the vaccination location, the type of vaccine available, the vaccination start date, and special considerations regarding vaccination. We encourage providers to refer to this schedule when educating patients about the H1N1 vaccine and its availability to them. The vaccination schedule is included as an attachment to this email and is also available online at <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/H1N1FluVaccinationChart.pdf>.

H1N1 vaccination clinic for pregnant and post-partum women

An H1N1 vaccination clinic for pregnant and post-partum women is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the VNA of Care New England's office at 51 Health Lane in Warwick. This office is on the Kent Hospital campus. This clinic will be open to all pregnant women and to post-partum women up to six months post-partum.

H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Island residents in out-of-state colleges and universities

HEALTH is planning to hold an H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Island residents through 24 years of age who attend out-of-state colleges and universities. The clinic will be held sometime between December 21, 2009 and January 8, 2010. The exact clinic date, location, and hours of operation will be announced when available. In order to plan for such a clinic and estimate the number of eligible students, **we are asking interested students to pre-register for the clinic online before 4 p.m. on December 11, 2009.** Only students who have pre-registered will be able to attend the clinic. The online registration form is available at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/outofstatecollegeclinics/index.php>.

Infection control guidance for nursing homes

Nursing homes and long-term care facilities should refer to HEALTH guidance on mask and respirator use when implementing infection control measures in their facilities. This guidance is available on HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/SurgicalMasksN95Respirators.pdf>.

Remind patients to stay healthy this holiday season

HEALTH asks providers to remind their patients to practice healthful hygiene when gathering with family and friends this holiday season. Individuals can help prevent the spread of H1N1 flu by washing their hands regularly with warm water and soap or using alcohol-based hand gels; by coughing and sneezing into their sleeves or into tissues; and most importantly by staying home and avoiding social gatherings when they are ill.

The CDC recently launched a public awareness campaign to help travelers stay healthy this flu season. This campaign includes the recommendation that individuals with flu-like illness wait to travel until they have been fever-free (temperature less than 100.4°F/38°C) for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. More information for travelers is available at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/novel-h1n1-flu.aspx>.

ISDA questions and answers

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (ISDA) has convened a group of influenza experts to address questions about the clinical management and antiviral treatment of patients with H1N1. To view these questions and answers, see <http://www.idsociety.org/Content.aspx?id=15743>.

Varicella outbreak advisory

Providers should be aware of a varicella (chickenpox) outbreak in the Meadowbrook Waldorf School in West Kingston. A majority of the school's currently reported cases have occurred in children who never received the varicella vaccine. Vaccination is the best way to prevent infectious diseases, including varicella. According to Health Department policies and CDC guidelines regarding school outbreaks, unvaccinated children must stay home from school for up to three weeks after the last case in the outbreak. Unvaccinated children who receive at least one dose of the vaccine may return to school immediately. Students with one dose of vaccine are strongly recommended to get a second dose in the face of an outbreak. Children are being referred to their pediatricians for vaccination. To view the varicella Vaccine Information Statement, see <http://www.immunize.org/vis/varic07.pdf>.

Providers should note that there is a required minimum four-week interval between the administration of the live H1N1 intranasal vaccine and the varicella vaccine, which is also a live vaccine. There is no such required interval for the injectable flu vaccine. None of the students at the Meadowbrook Waldorf School's December 2 H1N1 vaccination clinic received the live vaccine.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived provider briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>